

## Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 SIL-01 COME-00 OPIC-03 LAB-04

AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 PPT-01 SCA-01

NEAE-00 FRB-03 XMB-02 CIEP-01 OMB-01 VO-03 STR-04

CEA-01 SAM-01 DHA-02 SAB-01 /098 W

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P R 021230Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3898

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY

INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

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ABU DHABI FOR SIMON PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SA, US, CVIS

SUBJECT: SECRETARY SIMON'S MEETING WITH FONMIN SAUD: MOSTLY VISAS

SUMMARY: SAUDI FONMINISTER PRINCE SAUD AL FAISAL TOLD SECRETARY OF TREASURY SIMON FEB 29 THAT SAUDI ARABIA'S BOYCOTT AND VISA POLICIES ARE BASED UPON KINGDOM'S POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO ISRAEL AND NOT ON RELIGIOUS OR ETHNIC CONSIDERATIONS. HENCEFORTH ALL VISAS APPLICANTS (INCLUDING USG PERSONNEL) WHO APPLY FOR VISAS AT SAUDI EMBASSY IN U.S. WOULD HAVE TO STATE THEIR RELIGION. BUT JEWISH APPLICANTS SHOULD NOT CONSIDER ANY DISCRIMINATION WAS THEREBY INTENDED. SAG HAD LEGITIMATE INTERNAL REASONS FOR NEEDING TO KNOW RELIGION OF VISA APPLICANTS. HOLY CITIES OF MECCA AND MEDINA FOR INSTANCE OPEN ONLY TO MUSLIMS. VISAS TO AMERICAN JEWISH APPLICANTS WOULD

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HENCEFORTH BE STAMPED INTO THEIR PASSPORTS IN WASHINGTON.

1. SECRETARY OF TREASURY SIMON, ACCOMPANIED BY CHARGE HORAN, PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR SEIDMAN, AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TREASURY PARSKY, SPENT AN HOUR WITH PRINCE SAUD EVENING OF FEB 29. PRINCE SPOKE WARMLY OF SAG'S DESIRE TO COOPERATE WITH USG ECONOMICALLY, AND SAID HE BELIEVED LATEST MEETING OF JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS HAD BEEN USEFUL AND BENEFICIAL TO INTERESTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

2. SECRETARY SIMON MENTIONED, AS HE HAD DURING PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH KING KHALID (JIDDA 1511) THAT AN OBSTACLE IN THE PATH OF EVEN BETTER U.S.-SAUDI ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS WAS THE WIDESPREAD MISUNDERSTANDING IN THE UNITED STATES ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA'S POSITION ON VISAS AND THE BOYCOTT. THE SECRETARY EXPLAINED IN PARTICULAR HOW THE SECONDARY BOYCOTT ASPECTS OF THE ARAB BOYCOTT WERE PROSCRIBED UNDER U.S. ANTI-TRUST LAW. PRINCE SAUD SAID THE BOYCOTTS WERE REGARDED BY SAUDI ARABIA -- AS THEY WERE BY OTHER ARAB STATES -- AS A LEGITIMATE MEANS OF APPLYING POLITICAL/ECONOMIC PRESSURE. THE MOTIVES UNDERLYING THE BOYCOTT, HE SAID, WERE POLITICAL AND NOT RELIGIOUS OR ETHNIC. ARAB ACTION SHOULD BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF A QUASI-LEGAL STATE OF WAR THAT HAS EXISTED BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL FOR THE LAST THIRTY YEARS.

3. FURTHERMORE, SAUD SAID, THE USG SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT SAUDI ARABIA'S VISA POLICY HAD THE SAME POLITICAL BASIS. MANY JEWS HAD ENTERED SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE SAG WOULD CONTINUE TO ALLOW THEM TO DO SO. THE SAG WAS AWARE THAT UNDER ISRAELI LAW EVERY JEW WAS A POTENTIAL ISRAELI CITIZEN. FOR THIS REASON, VISA APPLICATION BY SOME JEWS MIGHT RECEIVE SPECIAL SAUDI SCRUTINY. AS A GENERAL RULE, HOWEVER, SAUD SAID NO AMERICAN JEW SHOULD ASSUME DISCRIMINATION WAS INTENDED WHEN HE WAS ASKED TO SPECIFY HIS RELIGION ON HIS VISA APPLICATION CARD. THERE WERE VARIOUS REASONS WHY THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT HAD A RIGHT AND A NEED TO KNOW THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF ITS VISITORS. ONE OBVIOUS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REASONS WAS THE NEED TO BE ABLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THOSE SAUDI RESIDENTS THAT WERE PERMITTED TO GO TO MECCA (MUSLIMS) AND THOSE WHO WERE NOT (NON-MUSLIMS). PRINCE SAUD POINTED OUT, AS HE HAS DONE IN THE PAST, THAT NOT TOO LONG AGO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS ITSELF TAKING DISCRIMINATORY ACTION AGAINST VISA APPLICANTS OF ARAB ETHNIC ORIGIN.

4. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT THE SAG AS PART OF ITS ATTEMPT TO NORMALIZE THE HANDLING OF VISAS BY JEWISH APPLICANTS WOULD HENCE FORTH (A) REQUIRE THAT ALL RPT ALL VISA APPLICANTS -- INCLUDING JECOR APPLICANTS -- STATE THEIR RELIGION ON THEIR VISA APPLICATION CARD; (B) THE SAG WOULD ROUTINELY PROCESS VISA APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FROM USG OFFICIALS; AND (C) WOULD ROUTINELY STAMP IN WASHINGTON THE PASSPORTS OF AMERICAN JEWS RECEIVING VISAS. THESE WOULD NO LONGER HAVE TO ENTER SAUDI ARABIA BY THE DEVICE OF AIRPORT PASSES.

5. MR. PARSKY AND MR. HORAN SAID BOYCOTT AND VISA MATTERS HAD BECOME CONFLATED IN U.S. PUBLIC OPINION. BOTH WERE REGARDED AS DERIVING FROM A SAUDI ARABIA PREJUDICE AGAINST PEOPLE OF A CERTAIN RACE, CREED, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN. WITH REGARD TO THE BOYCOTT, A STATEMENT HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE CLARIFYING THE SAUDI POSITION; IT WOULD BE HELPFUL, HOWEVER, IF THE SAG COULD PUBLICLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY MAKE CLEAR THE POLITICAL NATURE OF ANY VISA RESTRICTION AS WELL. IT WAS NOTED THAT KING KHALID HAD MADE THIS POSITION CLEAR IN HIS MEETING WITH SECRETARY SIMON. THEY SAID IF IT COULD BE MADE EQUALLY CLEAR TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, THE SAUDI CASE IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE STRENGTHENED. PRINCE SAUD THOUGHT THIS COULD BE DONE.

6. COMMENT: IN THE EVENT, HOWEVER, THE SAG DID NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE THE DESIRED STATEMENT PUBLICLY CLARIFYING ITS VISA POLICY. ON MARCH 2, MFA'S POLITICAL UNDER SECRETARY AMBASSADOR MANSOURI TOLD CHARGE THAT BECAUSE OF POLITICAL REASONS THE SAG DECIDED IT COULD NOT NOW MAKE A STATEMENT ON VISAS, WHILE ITS POLICIES WERE UNDER SCRUTINY AND CRITICISM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THE UNITED STATES.  
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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** CVIS, PFOR, SA, IS, XF, US, (SIMON, WILLIAM E), (SAUD, SAUD IBN FAYSAL AL)  
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